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ABSTRACT

This document incorporates questionnaire results of a national study sample drawn from the million high school juniors and seniors who had taken the ACT battery during 1969-70. Students responded to more than 100 multiple-choice items and to one open-end question each on student protest, parents, and schools and teachers. This volume records excerpts from responses to the schools and teachers question by 1,603 students. Twenty self-rating questions for teachers, based on characteristics reported by students as those most needed by teachers and those most admired by students, conclude the publication. (Author)

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How Students Rate Their Schools and Teachers

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This volume is the third in an NASSP series focusing on the secondary school student. The first, published in 1969, is titled *The Reasonable Exercise of Authority*, by Robert L. Ackerly. It is an analysis of the concept of due process as applied to schools and students. It includes recommendations on 10 issues that have arisen in almost every secondary school of America. The second volume is *Disruption in Urban Public Secondary Schools*, by Stephen K. Bailey, published in 1970. It reports a study of the size and nature of the problem of student disruption, its causes, and strategies for response.

The Reasonable Exercise of Authority is available from NASSP for one dollar per copy, with a 20 percent discount for 10 or more copies. *Disruption in Urban Public Secondary Schools* sells for two dollars per copy, with the same discount. Payment must accompany orders of five dollars or less.

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Introduction

THE study that resulted in this volume was conducted as part of the first senior post-doctoral research fellowship awarded by the new Research Institute of the American College Testing Program, Iowa City, Iowa.

When its author, Dr. Gordon A. Sabine, offered the manuscript to NASSP for publication, the editorial staff recognized that it had enormous potential as a stimulant to school improvement.

Many polls have sampled student opinion in recent years. Many studies have explored the nature and meaning of student restlessness and dissent. Results are usually given in statistical, pre-digested, often overanalyzed form. But here is a study in which the author allowed the students to speak openly for themselves, with no loaded questions, no "channeling" into prearranged categories, and no Procrustean lopping off to fit fancy theories. Dr. Sabine has simply presented what the students said in answer to three key questions. As expected, some of the responses are critical, but many are highly complimentary.

We predict that very few principals and teachers will start this book and fail to complete it. We predict that it will be a powerful aid to teachers and principals as well as those engaged in teacher preparation. These members of the profession hold the key to the improvement of instruction.

OWEN KIERNAN
Executive Secretary
National Association of
Secondary School Principals

April 10, 1971

CHAPTER 1

How This All Came To Be

HOW DO YOU GET FEEDBACK from students? How do you find out what they really think about you? How do you know how you're doing?

To get some answers to these questions, the American College Testing Program supported a "YOUTHPOLL" questionnaire study of a national sample of American youth in 1970. *How Students Rate Their Schools and Teachers* consists of more than 600 brief quotations from comments which teen-agers wrote either right after they had been graduated from high school or when they were starting their senior year in school.

They were asked to share, on a confidential basis, their reactions to their experiences with high schools, and with both their best teachers and their worst teachers.

Their attitudes will be least surprising to those who have kept up with the rapidly changing moods of youths today.

Their candor and clarity and openness, their eloquent and moving pleas for compassionate consideration from adults they consider important—these come through on every page.

Are the quotations appearing in this volume representative of the total response? Broadly speaking, yes. Of those students who expressed an attitude, three out of four had something negatively critical to say about their school experience. If there is a bias in the selection of quotations, it is definitely on the favorable side.

There is criticism here, some of it bitter, even savage, when students describe how they feel they were short-changed.

But there also is praise here, the full-throated and joyful praise of students responding to "best" teachers who have immensely influenced their lives.

Both attest to the continuing, probably increasing, importance of the high school teacher and the total high school experience. As families atomize and home influences deteriorate, the caring teacher, backed we hope by a caring administrator, may become the most influential adult in a student's life. What else that teacher does besides care—what particular subject he or she may teach, for example—becomes less and less important. What *is* important is the ability of an adult human being to meet and accept a student as another human being who *does* count for something.

• • •

The comments in this book came from a YOUTHPOLL conducted through the American College Testing Program in the fall of 1970. The students were selected from the million high school juniors and seniors who had taken the ACT battery during 1969–70. They responded to more than 100 multiple-choice type items, and then wrote their answers to three open-end questions—one on student protest, one on their parents, one on schools and teachers.

The quotations in this volume are excerpts from the responses in the schools-and-teachers area. They are reprinted by permission from the total YOUTHPOLL report published in April, 1971, by ACT.*

A total of 1,603 students returned YOUTHPOLL questionnaires. This was a 31 percent response, considered excellent, given the length and complexity of the instrument. The questionnaires had been mailed to students' home addresses in late September, and most of them were answered by students who had just started their college studies.

Any sample of ACT test-takers is, of course, a group of college-bound youth whose test scores or grades are higher than

* *When You Listen, This Is What You Can Hear*, copyright 1971, the American College Testing Program, which may be ordered from the ACT Publications Division, P.O. Box 168, Iowa City, Ia. 52240. Single copies are $3; there is a sizable discount for quantity and school orders.

those of the "average" high school senior or graduate. This, however, did not seem to skew the results. Other opinion surveys of broader samples of comparable young men and women, administered during the same fall, 1970, period, produced results which seemed parallel to YOUTHPOLL responses on parallel items.

• • •

How did these youngsters get the way they are today? Of one thing you can be certain: They didn't start kindergarten with these same attitudes and opinions and feelings.

Their emotions grew from experience. And it is we who gave them that experience.

Read for yourself. After the quotes, there is a "teacher self-rating chart," to help you figure how you would have rated had these been your students commenting on you.

What the students have said deserves to be taken seriously, very seriously. As a teacher or principal, you may not like their comments, and those comments may not even be completely true or fair, but they are what the youths feel. They are the attitudes and opinions and emotions they take into their adult lives as voters and taxpayers.

CHAPTER II

What the Students Had To Say About Schools and Teachers

THE QUESTION: If you were invited to make a speech to the principal and teachers of the high school you attended, what would you like to say?

1. Some students were critical of the entire system:

"I would tell my high school principal how much I wanted to learn, and how my desire was vanquished. I would mention the silly backward rules which inhibit social and academic development. I would ask that the students be allowed to leave quickly, before they are turned into mice, too meek and too well-trained for anything but a dreary existence."

"I would tell them that the only thing that was worth doing in school seemed like the football team."

"The entire school reminded me of the city zoo."

"My high school diploma doesn't mean one little thing to me, except that I followed our society's standards."

"The whole educational system needs a good overhaul. It cannot continue the way it is. I've seen school mess up too many of my friends. It taught kids only blind obedience, hate, and violence."

"I would like to say 'Wake up! Look at how many kids you've

made dislike school and learning simply because you couldn't take the time.' I'd tell them they turn more minds off than on simply because there's no challenge, nothing to really interest you."

"I'd tell them how Mickey Mouse the whole school was, and how they wasted plenty of tax dollars."

"I would like to ask them what their philosophy of education is, because in the 12 years I attended that school, they never had one. I would ask why they spend so much money on damn visual aids and still have a lousy library, and in general, poor teachers. I would ask the principal how he can be in this honored position and have an obviously closed mind to the young open minds under his direction."

"Today, learning has become more a bore instead of a privilege. I got straight *A*'s because I was able to perform like a non-thinking robot computer."

Some directed their comments to the teachers:

"Ladies and Gentlemen: You make me sick. Go back to your small desks and teach what the boss wants and don't make waves."

"Teachers act like they listen and want to know, but when put to the test, they only listen to the part they want to hear."

"You are bigots, hypocrites, and the biggest farce ever seen. You don't care that a kid gets beat up on a picnic because he's black or because he's not from your town."

Others were more violent:

"You have made school a hellish experience."

"Your school will not be around in 10 years if it stays the same as it has been, because it is not relevant. If I knew how to bomb the school and get away with it, I would."

2. About one in four students responding to the YOUTHPOLL questionnaire reported a fine experience in high school:

"In my high school, quality was much more important than quantity. I am proud of my school and shall support it to my dying day."

"Thanks. I think I received the best of everything from high school, and those were the best years of my life."

"Thank you for making school a place I am not afraid of."

Some students would prefer to be back in school:

"I had pride in my school. I wish my high school days were in front of me rather than behind me."

"At times I wish I were back. It's hard to end high school days in a school as nice as mine."

And they felt teachers deserve more pay:

"They don't pay our best teachers enough, because they always leave."

"I hope the taxpayers give you the money you need, but I fear they won't."

THE QUESTIONS: Remember your best high school teacher? What made this person so great? In contrast, think of your worst high school teacher. What made that person so poor?

3. Two characteristics were mentioned most often as typical of a "best" teacher. One of these was "demanding." Students want to be made to work hard. They want to be stretched. They really respond to the sense of accomplishment that results:*

"My best teacher was the one who made me do the most work."

"My best teacher was my strictest."

* The other was "caring." See page 24.

"He taught English and when I say he taught, he did. Through all my grade school years, I had an English teacher that fooled around and naturally I didn't learn English well. I got this man in the 11th grade and learned well. He was great because he taught and did his job like he was supposed to."

"She made us work without our knowing it."

"Her tests were murder."

"My teacher was rough, but straight. There was a time for everything. No one played until he played—and that was after class hours."

A teacher who is demanding does not have to be an ogre, as these comments testify:

"She expected stiff stuff and, surprisingly, received it from us all. She ignored the moans and 'I can'ts' and got a terrific response. She related well, shared herself, and had a fabulous, subtle sense of humor."

"She made us work our tails off with papers once a week and daily quizzes, but she taught. She made us understand, which is the great thing about a good teacher."

Working hard for a good teacher makes a student feel good:

"She really taught instead of making school a big game. I like to work for my grade and I enjoy learning, and I learned more than I did all the previous year."

"He made you work hard enough so that when you got a good grade, you were proud of it."

"He expected more than any other teacher, but when a teacher is good, you don't mind the work."

"He was very hard, but his notes were so thorough that it was a good feeling to know everything."

When a teacher is demanding, students rise to meet expectations:

"For the first time, I did extra reading for class. He expected

me to know more and I respected him for his intelligence and tried to live up to it. (They fired him at the end of the year.)"

"She made you get your lesson; and, if you did not have her lesson the next morning when you went to class, she would put you out. I wasn't the type that likes to get put out, so I learned a great deal."

"He had faith in us and if he believed we could do something, we felt we couldn't let him down. He was very hard but we had something to work for."

The impact of a demanding teacher can extend far beyond the subject matter of the course:

"He made us want to work our fool heads off in his class. He kept me from dropping out of school."

Students sometimes made a clear distinction between their "best" teacher and the teacher they "liked best." For example:

"My very best teacher was one I hated. She sure knew how to teach English, though. She made us write all the time. I learned."

Demanding teachers earn respect. Undemanding teachers do not:

"My worst teacher failed to be the head of the class. He let the students control the class, which is a hopeless way to conduct any group situation. Rather than setting up his own rules, he let the class decide everything. Few respected him."

"She was a completely disorganized, unstable person. I could not respect her; therefore I found it very difficult to accept or do what she told us."

"Worst" teachers don't interest or motivate their students:

"My worst teacher was there only for the paycheck. Concern for what her students were learning never entered her mind. Her classes were very dull and no one was anxious to do more

than just get by. Students want to be challenged, and if they aren't, they lose interest."

"She always read our lesson out of a book. After a while, you lose interest."

"What made my worst teacher so poor was that he was lazy and worked just enough to get by. He never was a challenge to his students and as a result they were never excited about the work and didn't put their best effort into it. If anything is worth doing (and I believe teaching is), then it's worth doing well. It's too bad some teachers can't figure that out."

"He was a student teacher and gave us too much 'play time' with field trips, guest speakers, etc., which had nothing to do with the subject. Example: It was a Latin class, and one of the guests was a magician."

The result of a class with an undemanding teacher is the absence of learning:

"He never 'put out.' He was always too busy with something else, so we had to teach ourselves. In chemistry, that's very difficult."

"I'll never forgive her for wasting my time. In any course, you expect teaching, outside work, and advancement. I didn't expect class time to be used for writing homeroom reports, absurd topics, and an everyday 'free-for-all'."

"I was transferred to this man's class with four weeks left in the year to even out the racial quota. He knew nothing. We learned nothing. We did virtually nothing. And it was my senior English class, too."

"This person never taught class. We spent all our time talking among ourselves. I am only 18 but I already feel cheated."

"He would have made a fair comedian or writer, but we never got around to doing much physics."

"We would go for a month at a time without using paper or pencil."

The worst teachers asked for very little work and were—in the students' opinions—too easy in their grading:

"My worst teacher was the one who made me do the least work."

"I never felt challenged, did not study, and still got an *A*."

"She didn't make us work. The tests were too easy (when we had them) and the discussions were very thin."

"I made *A*'s under her and came out of the class just as dumb as I was when I went in."

"He let kids pass that should have flunked."

"He let us cheat."

There were others who permitted trivia to drown out the important:

"He spent very little time teaching and vast amounts of time on discipline, sharpening pencils, writing passes for the rest room, taking roll, and waiting for the bell."

"We had to keep notebooks and were graded on them. No matter if we learned anything from them. They had to be what he wrote on the board and they had to be neat."

"We just copied notes off the blackboard for the whole period. He dictated answers to us, and we copied them down and handed them in for a grade."

4. Students recognize and respect intelligence and want their teachers to be smarter than they themselves are. They described some of their best teachers as:

"She had a mind you wouldn't believe. Just about any subject had a place of ease in her conversation."

"He really knew what he was talking about. He was well read, both in and out of his field."

"This man always answered questions and never had to stop to look them up. This made the class respect him."

Sometimes they found intelligence lacking:

"We, the students, had to tell my worst teacher how to do the math problems."

"We walked all over him. He was dull and ignorant. All we did for him was write reports and read them to the class. He lectured once—for 10 minutes. I learned absolutely nothing."

"She didn't understand English, much less the other language she taught."

"He had an IQ of approximately 30, and was unable even to read the text without stumbling over words."

Students know they are expected to prepare for each class and assume their teachers will also. Some of their worst teachers were described as:

"She usually didn't have enough lecture or lab material to keep us busy and would let us just sit and waste time talking and going to the snack bar."

"It seemed as though he was seeing the class material for the first time in his life."

5. Knowing what to expect from a teacher makes a student more confident and secure:

"He set up a schedule and stayed on it so you knew where you were and when to be prepared."

"She dished out all the information and the students were expected to learn all of it. The class was completely structured. She didn't let the students run over her. For once, students were expected to play the part of students."

The unpredictable teacher is hard on students:

"He came to school in whatever spirit he left his home. If something had gone wrong at his home the night before, watch out because you're going to get the after-effects."

"The class had no guidance. Practically every day was a free-for-all. It was to have been an English class but the closest we came to English was to listen to poetry once and read one short play. The teacher spent class time working on debate and speech contests."

"He would come to school with a hangover and because he didn't feel like teaching, we didn't learn much."

"He made assignments, forgot them, and gave zeroes to his students for getting the wrong assignments."

"He had an unpredictable personality. One minute he was your best friend and the next, he was getting all over you for no reason."

"She would say one thing and the next day say that she never said it. Then she would call you a liar."

"She never seemed to know what was happening and on some occasions even started to teach our Spanish class French."

6. If students could learn from textbooks only, there would be no need for teachers. What the teacher does is provide alternate explanations and a structure and schedule to help as many as possible understand and learn as much as possible. Or as students put it:

"My best teacher turned a hard class into an easy one by giving us fundamentals first and then building up into the hard areas."

"When he explained something new, he went step by step and never took anything for granted."

"Best" teachers "seemed to sense when the class didn't understand," and would be both patient and persistent:

"She looked at teaching as a real challenge and wasn't satisfied until she was convinced she had done the best job possible in helping all students learn. This is what a real teacher is."

"He gave a complete explanation. None of this 'go look it up' stuff."

"He used our type of language. He never used words we had to look up."

"My best teacher was for a class I hated the most, chemistry. She might have to explain the same thing in 10 different ways but she'd keep up with it until you understood. I wouldn't have made that class without a teacher like her."

"If you didn't understand, he would stay after school on his own time and explain it to you."

To the best teachers, questions were welcome:

"She answered every question, no matter how obvious it seemed."

"You wanted to know why, and she always had the answers."

"He knew a lot about his subject matter but never considered one of our questions too dumb."

Other teachers were just the opposite:

"She believed you should not ask questions in class because you were dumb if you did."

"She was a real bitch. She would say to ask questions if you didn't understand, and then, when you asked a question, she would put you down by saying you shouldn't have had to ask that question because she had just explained it."

"We couldn't ask questions in the middle of the class if we didn't understand something. By the time the class was over, you couldn't remember the question because it was usually a small step in a proof. But come the test, you still didn't know, so you flunked."

"If we asked a question he couldn't answer, he'd dismiss it right off by saying it wasn't on the test."

"He was rarely in the classroom and, when he was, he was always eating, drinking coffee, and making jokes. We could never ask questions because nothing was being taught to ask questions about."

"She taught the course like she was reading it from a book. One could never ask her a question because she'd lose her place."

"This teacher hid behind the overhead projector from which we copied notes every day. He was afraid to communicate with students, and even more afraid of the questions we might ask."

And there are some teachers who make you wonder why they think they're in the classroom at all:

"Instead of trying to figure it out with us, she would just hand us the answer book and tell us to look it up and not bother her."

"He stood up and said, 'Read the book. Everything I can say is in the book.' (I didn't put out for that class and rarely showed up for it.)"

"She would tell you your term paper was all wrong but wouldn't tell you how to improve it, even if you asked her."

There is a difference between knowing something yourself and being able to help others know it:

"He could work on any type of problem there is, but he couldn't explain to you how he did it."

"He was well-schooled in his subject but he couldn't communicate it in a language we could understand. He couldn't explain things in more than one approach. He'd repeat the same one over and over. At midsemester, I switched to another teacher and went from a *D* to an *A*."

7. The survey found students very sensitive to the treatment given to all their classmates, not merely what they received themselves. They particularly recognized and complimented teachers who treated even the slowest students the same as the brightest:

"He didn't tell his students how dumb they were or how much they didn't know."

"He treated all students equally, even the poor or unintelli-

gent students. He did something for every one of us and didn't let anyone down."

"He helped students who needed special help without making an issue out of it and without making them feel stupid."

"My science teacher was a man who tried to interest everyone in his class. The bright ones got special projects; the slow ones were encouraged to watch hard experiments and do simple ones themselves. He never made the bright ones special or the dumb ones feel dumber."

"He knew how to teach those who knew a lot, those who knew a little, and those who knew nothing at all."

8. Many students identified as their best teachers those who did not confine themselves to "the book" but added variation to the class content and teaching methods:

"She wasn't worried about doing things by the book; she was interested in people."

"In his lecture, he didn't just repeat the book but instead presented interesting material that went beyond the text."

"He had a knack for mixing interesting humorous stories, current events, and other trivia with mathematics. For all the humor and philosophy that went on, we covered an amazing amount of math."

"My best was an English teacher with a great deal of sensitivity. Rather than have a textbook and assignments, it was a thinking period. He talked and we thought about it."

"I think she spent 23 hours a day making sure our assignments would teach us something and also be interesting."

"Worst" teachers were identified as rigid in both course content and schedule:

"She never, not even once, said anything that wasn't in the book. I didn't see her much, because I slept most of the time."

"She had a schedule which had to be followed. If something came up, she was at her wit's end. 'Oh, dear, we're a day behind.' Too many teachers are like this. The student has to learn at the teacher's pace instead of at his own."

"The only thing she worried about was getting through the book before June."

9. As "almost adults," teen-agers like to think for themselves and respect the teacher who will force them to think:

"He made us think for ourselves, which is always better than regurgitating facts."

"He didn't teach us; he helped us learn to think."

"My best teacher taught math, but he cared very little for answers. What he cared about was whether you really understood the methods for doing the problems and the reasoning behind them."

"She never spoon-fed us, but rather led us to probing questions. It was the first class in which I ever really thought."

"His course was based on self-discovery. He made us argue with him; because, if we didn't think and explain our ideas, he would jump ahead and make conclusions for us. He knew we didn't want anyone else thinking for us."

Some students attacked the "system" for not leading students to thinking for themselves:

"Far too many young people come out of high school with little or no ability to think originally. The only prerequisites for a successful high school career have been an empty head, a strong wrist, and time to do what was expected with as little questioning as possible."

"The attitude that the 'teacher is right because he is the teacher and look at all the schooling and experience he's had' is destructive. I want to find out that I can have opinions that count, without being penalized."

10. The very best teachers can make learning lively and easy to take:

"We got our work done, but the class was fun and exciting."

"He made a subject I disliked become enjoyable."

"Her hour seemed to last only minutes."

"His class was like a 'breather' from the rest of the day."

"She made history sound like a story. Even the students who hated history stopped talking and listened to her. She made it worth coming to school."

"He made our lessons in Macbeth so interesting, we dreaded the end of the class."

The opposite of exciting is boring:

"He was boring. Horribly, horribly boring. He spoke in a monotone and used exceedingly big words that no one understood."

"He was the most boring teacher I ever had. He spoke in a monotone for the entire hour. He seemed to be drained of every ounce of energy."

"She was like a living statue in the middle of the room. Her mouth never moved and her expression never changed. She put the class to sleep. A person could learn more watching an ant."

"Many times I slept through this class, along with at least 45 percent of the others in the course. I complained to my counselor about this particular teacher and she said she had had several other complaints but there was nothing the school could do."

"She fell asleep in class.

"He sat back in his chair with his hands behind his head, sleeping."

"His class was boring and often he'd fall asleep himself."

11. Virtually every high school senior wants a chance to "have his say." The best teachers are able to turn this into an effective learning approach:

"We had fantastic class discussions. Everyone contributed. Students picked and led the talks. The teacher was like a moderator."

"My best teacher guided his students into teaching themselves through discussion."

The teacher who can involve every student—not merely the talkative ones—is much admired:

"My best teacher brought people out of shells and got them thinking, resulting in complete class participation."

"He could make even quiet students become involved in class discussions. No one ever wanted to cut his class."

The next step beyond class discussion is class participation in planning course content:

"At the beginning of each week, the class would meet and make out a lesson plan for that week. We would decide what we wanted to study—what author, what theme topic, what sentence structure—and submit it for her approval. She gave us a voice in our course and made us feel important."

"Once when we told her we weren't interested in 20th Century English poetry, we chucked the entire lesson in the book to listen to Rod McKuen's poetry. It was really great. We learned to appreciate poetry."

In contrast, "worst" teachers were described as:

"She never listened to our ideas or gave us a chance to express ourselves."

"She just stood up in front of the class reading history out of a book with no class discussion. No one learned; we just remembered for a short time."

12. There are teachers who help too much:

"My worst teacher didn't really teach us anything because he would do all the problems himself."

"She would work out a problem completely by herself, rather than make you think it out for yourself. Then she would give the student credit for the problem she did."

13. Some teachers make little progress because they simply do not stick to the subject. Students want to learn, and identify such teachers as their worst:

"He never stuck to the subject. Every day we would talk about something different. I never learned one thing."

"She would start class with a few notes pertaining to the subject and then waste 45 minutes every day telling us about the miseries and problems of her life. Students don't come to class just to listen to someone's pains. We have enough of our own."

"She didn't teach. She just sat around and talked about the 'old days'."

"He stayed on the subject about 5 minutes and then spent the rest of the class talking about days gone by."

More often, the subject would be the teacher's personal life:

"She told us more about her family and her life than what she taught."

"During class she would talk about stupid things that happened to her at home, and of course about her family."

"My worst teacher? I didn't learn English but I learned about her dates the last weekend."

"All she did was gossip about her husband, her child, and her cat. I learned everything about her and nothing about English."

14. Students ask their teachers to be open-minded:

"My best teacher was known for his objectivity, which is hard to find in many high schools, especially in small towns."

"We had some really fabulous arguments on every subject under the sun and he taught me to stick up for my point of view

and hang in there. He was possibly the only really open-minded person I ever met."

But don't always find them so:

"My worst teacher taught government and continually attempted to indoctrinate students with his Fascist ideas."

"My worst high school teacher was a Communist. He was constantly preaching Communist goals and doctrines. He believed all countries should be dissolved and the world should be ruled by the proletariat. He influenced many undecided children to the far left. He is a menace to the school system and should be released from employment. He should go home to Russia."

15. Is discipline necessary for high school seniors? Very definitely yes, in the opinion of students. They see order in the classroom as related to the opportunity to learn, and they resent being deprived of this opportunity. Here are just a few of the many comments about their worst teachers:

"This teacher was wretched. She had no discipline. There was no atmosphere for learning. The lab was blown up four times in one semester."

"He ran such a liberal class that he had no control over the students. It was not unusual for drug exchanges to take place right in the classroom."

"He let the students rule him. They could cuss him out or just leave the classroom and he didn't try to stop them."

"He had no order in the classroom. Everyone would talk and then he would start yelling."

"At our school, I was shocked at the lack of discipline. Students were beaten and robbed; gambling in the halls was a common practice. Students would run and fight in the halls, and the teachers would simply shut the classroom doors instead of settling the disturbance. Unruly students who persist in disturbing other students should be expelled so that the majority can learn."

And then there were those teachers who were too strict:

"His discipline interfered with the subject, and he always placed more emphasis on his discipline."

"He expected us to sit at our desks with hands folded and eyes on the teacher."

"He tried to keep us all perfectly silent, speak only when spoken to."

"You had to obey him to the letter. Too much discipline is as bad as not enough."

16. The subject of tests is of universal interest to students, and they had many reactions to the way their teachers used this device. One student wrote:

"My best high school teacher believed in no tests or quizzes."

Another cited as his best teacher one who used testing as a teaching, not merely as an evaluation, device:

"He was always willing to correct a test right after he gave it, and to work the problems a student missed. I have yet to experience a more efficient method of learning."

But many more students cited as their worst teachers those who did not use testing as an effective teaching device:

"Her tests were concerned with small details and one could receive the same grade whether or not he studied. Guessing was the best way."

"He would always give us the questions and answers for a test a day ahead, and then all you had to do was memorize the answers and you were all set. But you didn't learn anything."

"He was lazy and all of his tests were oral (he didn't like to write or type) and all the questions were irrelevant and picky."

"His tests were ridiculous. Example: 'Tell what you know about World War I.' "

The relationship between test questions and class discussions sometimes was vague:

"His tests had nothing to do with what was talked about in class."

"His tests covered nothing he lectured on, making it so that one had to cheat to pass."

Some teachers had the reputation for not making up new tests:

"She gave the same tests every year."

"His tests were the same as he gave the previous year. Students would memorize the answers off a test their older brother or sister had and come to class and yell the answers across the room. The teacher didn't care."

With some teachers, testing and cheating went together:

"We cheated on tests because he wasn't strict."

"He encouraged cheating in his class because he knew that in order to keep his job, a certain number of students must pass."

And with some, the teaching value of testing was completely lost:

"After he gave tests, he never would go over the questions the students missed and explain them."

"He didn't check the tests soon enough so we could learn from the mistakes we made."

17. Another subject in which all students are interested is grading. This is something that they are aware of virtually every day in school. And they have plenty of ideas of how grading ought to be done. Here is a suggestion from a student who has an idea (even though we may wonder about his own grade in arithmetic):

"There shouldn't be any grade of failing. If a person takes a hard subject and makes a failing grade of 50, this still is 50 percent more than he knew to begin with."

Others think the entire system is failing:

"The grading system is totally worthless. A teacher can fail you if you don't turn in a pile of busywork worksheets with answers taken directly out of the book (even if your test scores are in the top 10 percent of the class). This actually happened to a friend of mine."

"The pupils are overpowering the teachers. Seventy percent of the students graduating will do so because of the teachers' failure to give a failing mark when it was deserved."

Another had a complaint and a solution:

"The grading system is so low. A 50 is a C this year. If the kids were given the chance to grade themselves, they would be harder on themselves and learn a lot more."

There was one report that this suggestion was being used:

"She was not concerned with grades, and even let the students evaluate themselves—which most did honestly."

Students approved the grading approaches of these teachers:

"He took into consideration what a student did learn, rather than what we didn't learn, in determining a grade."

"She took all her students as people who are alive and real. She graded on each student's capabilities, and not on a curve."

"He didn't judge a student on how they appeared, black or white, long hair or short, male or female."

But this teacher was one of the worst:

"Those who had the reputation for making *A*'s automatically got *A*'s, whether she read their work or not. The same went for the *C* or *F* students."

Students are convinced there are teachers who grade students on a "like-dislike" basis. One "best" teacher was described as:

"She had rules that everyone had to follow. She didn't have any pets and you had to work for the grades you received."

And these were classed as "worst" teachers:

"We could get an average grade or better than average grade with very little or no effort. If she liked you, you got a good grade."

"I know I did terrible yet he gave me a *C* grade because I happened to be one of his 'pets.'"

"She could not separate between grading a person and judging him. If she didn't like someone, he would get bad grades. Just as simple as that."

"He had pets. He gave them easy questions for grades in class (I'm not jealous—I was his pet. But I didn't learn anything)."

"They were unfair and too easy on me because my father taught there."

"If she knew you were married or took drugs, she would fail you."

18. One of the two characteristics of "best" teachers mentioned most frequently by students was "caring." There were hundreds of responses that pointed out how important this has come to be to teen-agers:

"She cared about what happened to you."

"He cared. He showed it."

"This teacher cared. And no matter how much 'book learning' a person has, it is nothing until he cares."

"He wasn't the greatest teacher but he did know and care about young people. He also was willing to listen to our problems, school and otherwise, and advise when possible. He cared and that is what counts."

Caring also means loving:

"You actually looked forward to going to her class because there always was a friendly and loving atmosphere."

"He took pride in his students and cared for each one as if he or she were his own child."

"She was the most lovable and Christian woman I have ever met. She loved her profession and she loved everyone who was a part of it. She showed no prejudices toward any students. Her brilliant and not-so-brilliant students were all very precious to her."

Part of caring is being involved with students beyond the class subject:

"Even after you were through with her course, you still could go talk to her, ask her for advice, and she would help you in any way she could."

"He caught me attempting suicide, stopped me, and helped me understand my problems."

"You hear so much today about 'don't get involved.' My best teacher broke that rule. She was involved. She cared. She knew some of the kids in her classes were on drugs and even pushing them. We saw numerous films about drugs until the rest of us were quite bored. That didn't seem to work. About the only thing that did was a heart-to-heart talk with the class on what drugs are and aren't and what they can create you to be."

When teachers did not care, or love, or get involved, students identified them as their worst:

"He just did not care."

"He really did not care and said so."

"She didn't know her subject. She didn't care. She was there only to get married. Stupid."

"She didn't care. The sooner she could hand out the assignment and go off to the smoking lounge, the better she thought it was."

"For God's sake, if you don't give a damn whether kids learn and if you don't really care, then quit and get another job. If all you want is a paycheck, the kids suffer."

"An all-me, none-you attitude. This particular teacher would come in each day and give the assignment, give the answers for the previous assignment, and then leave."

Some teachers seemed to wage war:

"She regarded students as her enemies."

"She always thought someone was out to get her, so she wanted to get them first."

"He kept thinking that we had all declared war on him and decided to get us first. He was one paranoid person and really shouldn't have been a teacher. I kind of felt sorry for him."

"She was always picking on big kids because she thought that all big kids hated her. She was right."

And some teachers gave the impression of disliking students:

"He didn't give a damn about his students."

"She acted as if she hated all of us because we were young and wild."

"He always spoke poorly of the younger generation and kept books, tests, and even plain paper under lock and key."

"He told our class every day he hated kids. He would do everything possible to be gone from his class."

Some gave the appearance of being more interested in the salary than the students:

"He didn't give a damn for anything except his paycheck."

"My worst teacher took the attitude of 'I don't care, I'll still get my pay whether you pass or not.' I think this is a rotten attitude for a teacher to take."

"It seemed she was there for the money, which really killed me, because I wanted to learn and she was depriving me of that and wasting time that I could use."

Others just ignored students:

"She acted as if we were not there. She would give us assignments and then would forget about us."

"She would never hand our papers back for months. She was most obvious in letting her students know that she couldn't care less about them."

"She never could be bothered with her students. Her social life seemed to be more important."

"She didn't care if you learned anything or not. You were in her class for an hour a day, and that's about all you got: a place to sit for an hour."

19. There are teachers who are time-clock "machines." There are others whose willingness to help knows no bounds of time, place, subject matter, or person. Students recognize the difference. Some "worst" teachers:

"Her job was from 8 to 3, and that was it. No real dedication or interest. This can turn a student off for good."

"He had an 'I-don't-care' attitude. He wouldn't give up a free period to help me with a problem."

"He was a very nice guy, but he thought of teaching as a hobby. He didn't take it seriously. He left the school at 3 just as the students did, so you had no time to ask him about your problems."

"He was the type of teacher students are encouraged not to be—he would arrive two minutes before class and leave immediately after the period. He really didn't care about his subject or the students, and would just as soon have talked to a blank wall."

In contrast, willing-to-help teachers were identified as "best":

"She loved all the kids and gave of her time and herself for others."

"He listened to all problems, and never said 'I don't have time now, so sit down and save your question.'"

"He would give up his free time to talk about problems we had."

"She was always interested in the kids and would help them with no time limit whatsoever."

And then there were very special ones:

"He cared so much about his students understanding algebra that he would come in for an extra class at 7:30 each morning, before school opened."

"He had real concern for his students. He'd stay at school all night trying to help just one student."

"He would help kids with problems they couldn't take to their parents."

"If I had a problem I didn't want to talk to my parents about, I could talk to her with no fear of misunderstanding."

"You could go to her and talk to her almost as a second mother."

20. Students know that teachers are fallible, not infallible, human beings. And they want their teachers to admit this in public:

"We want guidance, we want an education, but we want it from people who aren't afraid to admit that they make mistakes."

"I do not care for a teacher who says she is right and that's that. I want a chance to argue my side."

One of the clearest ways for a teacher to make a hit with students is to be open and honest on this subject:

"My best teacher was very well informed, but she also admitted not knowing when she had no answer."

"She always stood up for what she believed in; but, if you could prove her wrong, she would admit it."

"His way wasn't the only way."

"If he made a mistake, he apologized and made us do the same."

And a quick way for a teacher to make the opposite impression is to claim infallibility:

"His ideas were set and no one could change them. He did not mind criticizing others, yet he could not take criticism in return."

"She wouldn't listen to your opinions and ideas unless they were like her own. She was right and everybody else was wrong. I didn't like her as a teacher at all."

"My worst teacher simply would not listen to you. He was always right, period."

"He put you down in front of others because you did not feel as he did."

"If you didn't agree with him, he'd call you crazy."

"He could do no wrong. He was the kind that made a student want to quit school. I told him so."

"He was always right. Hippies were all 'dirty, stupid, communistic.' We were all 'pinkies, atheists, spoiled and ungrateful babies.' "

"She was a narrow-minded, conceited, egotistical, know-it-all preacher."

21. Along with all the other demands students place upon teachers, they very much want them to be understanding, to relate to the teen-age generation regardless of their own age. As one wrote:

"Students need understanding by teachers as well as by their

family. They need reassurance, guidance, sympathy, and kindness. You can never give them too much."

Happily, many teachers do understand:

"My best teacher rang out with understanding."

"She was understanding and young at heart."

"He asked our opinions on subjects; he made an effort to see what makes teen-agers tick. I loved him."

"He could remember when he was young."

"He believed in us, and saw us as people instead of as radicals (as all of us are called). He put himself in our place."

"She was as much a philosopher as a French teacher. She understood her students and was completely for them. She once told the superintendent that if the students organized a peaceful demonstration for a just cause, she'd be at the head of the line."

Some teachers were especially aware of teen-agers' problems:

"He knew what was going on in the world. He knew the problems that faced students and understood them. He listened but didn't make a big deal out of everything."

"She understood the kids' problems. We could talk to her about anything—drugs, sex included."

And there were other teachers who did not understand:

"My worst teacher had no understanding of students and was a slob."

"She was so sheltered and protected she never did realize what was going on in the outside world. She never understood us and never even tried to."

"He would not relate to students. I felt there was a big screen in front of us all year."

"My teacher understood so little I actually felt a barrier between her desk and the students' desks."

22. The best teachers were such good models that they sometimes inspired their students to go into teaching:

"My history teacher made everything so exciting and interesting. I never thought I would enjoy American history but because of him I'd like to teach it."

"She loved her subject in such a way that it was conveyed to everyone in the class. She approached the material in a different way, and showed me that English doesn't have to be stuffy. She is the teacher that made me want to become an English teacher. If I convey 25 percent of the love she gave me for English to my students, I will think that I have been successful."

"She was so interested in her subject and her students that everyone wanted to learn. She inspired me to go into teaching, and made me feel that anyone could be taught with the kindness and help of a friend."

"She was the kindest, most compassionate person I have ever met. I had not planned to go to college until I got her as a teacher my senior year. She built up my self-confidence to such a degree that I decided I would go to college, somehow. Well, that's where I am now, on a scholarship grant, and my only wish is to be as great a teacher as she was."

Sometimes there is negative motivation:

"I want to teach because I care. I don't want the next generation to have to put up with grades, disciplinary actions against 17- and 18-year-olds for gum-chewing, and only one right answer (the teacher's)."

"I'm going to become a teacher in hopes that I will NOT be like the ones I had in high school. All teachers there had the same philosophy: 'Students should express their opinion, but it must be just like mine.' One day teachers aren't going to be so much concerned with teaching the ABC's but they're going to be very concerned with people (students) and how they look at life."

And sometimes a teacher can turn a student off:

"It was a pain to have to go to her class. She was so strict and set in her ways you were afraid to do anything except sit up straight, feet flat on the floor, and eyes straight ahead. She discouraged me so much I ended up dropping a class I really liked and wanted. I've always wanted to be a math teacher; but this course was math, and, after her, I've had it."

23. When the teacher likes his job and what he teaches, the enthusiasm rubs off on his students:

"He was excited about his job and the subject."

"She was so glad to be alive and with us."

"He liked what he taught and wanted us to like it, too."

"She was enthusiastic about her subject so it wore off on the students."

"I've known few people who could get as emotional or involved in their subject as my best teacher. It was just plain fun to sit in a classroom and listen to someone bubbling over and watch her literally jumping around when she taught."

24. High on any teen-ager's priority list is having friends. When a person can be friendly as well as be a teacher, that's a big plus:

"My best teacher's main object was to teach the class, but he didn't forget to be a friend, either."

"She always gave us cookies she made herself on the day before holidays."

"The one thing that made her so much better than my other teachers was that she was human. All her students felt they were on an equal basis with her because she tried to be everyone's friend."

"My best teacher was a friend of mine. All the time, while I was just being friends, he was sneaking an education into me. Just being around him was an education in itself."

To a teen-ager, the opposite can be deadly:

"My worst teacher wouldn't stop to look at a student out of class."

"You could pass him with a big smile on your face, and he would just look at you with a frown."

"She had a mind like a computer and no feelings, either."

Students want teachers to maintain their separateness, though:

"This teacher was bad because she tried to be 'one of the kids' and therefore lost some of the respect and authority a teacher should possess."

"He tried to be a pal instead of a teacher. I wanted to learn, but he didn't want to teach."

"He couldn't decide whether he wanted to be our drill sergeant or our best buddy, so he was a little bit of both. It was very confusing."

And some teachers tried so hard to be popular their effectiveness was seriously lowered:

"To try to stay on good terms with students, she let herself easily be talked out of assignments and work."

"Often he was talked into or out of something just to avoid danger or disappointment. It was fair to neither student nor teacher."

"She tried to conform to student wishes so she could be on good terms with her pupils. She never held to assigned dates on homework but stretched the time out so no student would get a penalty for a late paper."

"He wanted to be liked and in order to accomplish this he would always give a better grade than deserved."

"He tried to communicate with the students by having long hair and a mustache, but he still was hypocritical. He tried so hard to be liked by students that they disliked him tremen-

dously. And besides, we covered only 110 pages of chemistry all year."

"My worst was a teacher who tried to be part of the crowd. She had parties for students at her home. Her classes were full of fun but void of learning. There always was time for jokes, but no time for learning."

And there are still others who lost student respect for unusual reasons:

"He had and deserved no respect from students. (He shot rubber bands at students in study hall.)"

"To him, popularity and politics were everything. He promoted those he liked or felt could scratch his back at some time, and suppressed the others. If you couldn't do something for him, he wasn't about to do anything for you."

25. The way a teacher acts may be more important to students than how much the teacher knows:

"She didn't have that superior head about her as many teachers do."

"He was natural and didn't put on a 'teacher' act."

"He was great because he didn't put himself up on a pedestal and stick his tongue out at all us kids."

The other extreme is easily identified:

"My worst teacher thought he was supreme. He shot you down and turned you off."

"She acted like it was an honor for her to even take time to talk to us."

"She had a condescending air. Students can sense that right off, and when they do they clam up."

26. One personal characteristic students want teachers to "model" for them is genuineness:

"My best teacher was great because he was real and not a phony."

"He believed in telling it the way it is and not masking life as some kind of 'goody-goody.' "

"He showed concern, not just for me or my classmates but for world conditions and local doings. He made it known through what he said and did that he was not a 'put on' in class and something else behind students' backs."

"She was young and able to understand the problems and feelings of her students. She was not just a teacher; she expressed feelings like a human—she cried at the end of a movie in class when the hero died. I learned more because of this."

And students are quick to spot the lack of genuineness:

"He was all show, more concerned with showing you what he learned in college than in trying to teach."

"He was a phony. He tried to be a hippie by growing a beard and sideburns, which he thought would let him into the younger generation. But he was unimpressive and boring."

"He was a smart aleck who grew a beard, goofed off, and assigned busy work. He probably was a complete washout in high school and college and was trying so hard to impress us with his 'hip.' He was pitiful."

27. Students like to be able to confide in teachers, and the element of trust becomes highly important:

"If you had a problem, my best teacher would listen to you no matter what it was, and he wouldn't run to your parents and tell them what you said."

"He trusted students. He took 150 sophomores to the beach for three days. He expected us to behave and because he trusted us, we did, to the last person."

The loss of trust is identified as a serious flaw in this "worst" teacher:

"If you told him something personal, he would spread it to the rest of the faculty."

28. Students have a strongly developed sense of fairness. They like their teachers to be impartial and not to have favorites in class:

"My best teacher respected individuals for who they are, not who they used to be or who their parents were."

"My favorite teacher was black and beautiful. She wore no dashikis, she just wore her blackness with the same pride she carried herself. She let you know that she wasn't going to show any favoritism to anybody, black or white."

"He treated everyone fairly. He would tell even the coach's daughter to be still."

"She treated everyone as equals. If she didn't like your attitude, she didn't pretend she did, even if your father was superintendent of schools."

"My best high school teacher was my geometry instructor, who failed me. He was best because he wasn't prejudiced and gave each what they made."

Sometimes it was the parents who made the difference:

"He liked only the kids whose parents were big shots in town."

"If he knew your parents, he thought you were all right, especially if they were well-endowed with money and liked him."

"If a student has rich parents or is an athlete, he can do no wrong."

And sometimes it was the grades the students earned:

"He had no personal interest in students unless they made straight *A*'s."

"He showed favoritism to the best students and didn't really try to help the others. He would send a top student to help me with the assignment, making me feel like I wasn't smart and was just in the way."

The student's sense of justice rebels:

"Ordinary, average kids should not be penalized. They should receive equal attention from their instructors. Although they have not had all the opportunities of the others, they are still unique and beautiful people, having the right to equal attention."

29. Teen-agers yearn for models to live by and, in their own minds, set very high personal and moral standards for their teachers. Two happily described their best teachers:

"We respected him because he was the type of person we wanted to be when we were older."

"She laughed at herself, suffered when we suffered, and made us all think of her as a friend, a confidante, and a real honest person who was what we could be when we 'grew up.' "

When they discovered a teacher was not what they wanted, their disappointment was severe:

"My religion teacher was so hypocritical that it turned my stomach. He would tell us one thing and do the exact opposite."

"The principal and teachers talked of the low morals of the students, while theirs were certainly no better and everyone knew it."

The classroom, the students wrote, is not the place for the alcoholic:

"He was not a good example—too much drinking."

"She came to class drunk, day after day."

Nor do students want suggestive stories or actions in the classroom:

"My worst teacher told dirty jokes in class."

"He was the most ignorant and dirty-minded person I knew. He thought all girls were tramps, and made no secret of it."

"He was always asking us girls up to his apartment."

"He called us names and used vulgar language."

"He had bad morals, bad language, bad habits. He did not care what happened to students or what they did. He had no respect for himself or others."

The criticism included the women, too:

"She threw herself on the boys."

"She played up to the boys, bragged about her drinking habits, and dressed in clothes that were unsuitable for the classroom."

"She was a spiteful woman who hated anyone with a good set of morals. She cursed the entire class period. She was a low, cowardly, dishonest person."

"She was prejudiced against girls. We figured she didn't have enough love life so that she had to flirt constantly with the guys in the class."

"She was single and would come in and tell us how she got picked up over the weekend."

"She always talked about her husband's death and also talked about why a girl should live with a man two years before she is married."

30. Motivation plays a huge role in learning. And since relatively few of us, adults or students, have as our primary interest learning for learning's sake alone, the way a teacher motivates us is crucial:

"Make the kids want to learn, not just feel that they're there because they have to be."

"If the subject itself cannot grab the student's attention, the teacher's handling has to be enthusiastic and dynamic enough to make the student think he might get something (anything) out of the class."

"*Worst*" *teachers were described as:*

"She did nothing to make us want to work or want to please her. It is so very important to feel that a teacher cares."

"She didn't care how hard you tried in her class, she never praised you. She never gave you a second chance on anything."

But many "best" teachers were credited with:

"I found myself wanting to go to his class even though I couldn't stand the subject."

"She taught me more than a course, she taught me what a joy it was to really learn."

"He could present material in such a way as to make his students want to learn if only to please him."

"He made learning seem like something important to you as an individual and not just another step to money-making success in society or a grade on a report card."

Motivation can be generated in subtle, indirect, quiet ways:

"When she wanted us to do something, she matched intelligence and wit rather than manipulating us with her power."

"He didn't force anyone to do anything but made it clear the student was hurting himself by being lazy."

With the right handling and right controls, even negative appeals can result in positive motivation:

"He really scared me into studying and learning how not to cheat and still pass a course."

"He was an unusual man. He used embarrassment as a means of teaching. Whenever you learned anything, you would never forget it. Everyone talked about how much they hated him, but everyone would be heard saying, 'You've always learned something when you come from him.' "

But fear is a difficult appeal to control. It can become physical:

"My worst teacher was constantly trying to prove what a

big man he was. Whenever he disapproved of the actions of one of the boys, he would pick him up by the collar and shake him up. That was no atmosphere for learning."

"He constantly hit students."

"She would just as soon crack a ruler over your knuckles as kindly tell a person what he was doing wrong."

"He was such a big brute most of the students feared him. He made his mark by beating a couple of students for not having their gym equipment."

Some teachers make their students afraid, even without physical force:

"I was scared to death of him. I was so scared that even when I studied I really wouldn't learn anything, because I would be wondering whether he would call on me and what would happen if I didn't know the answer. He yelled a lot."

"She scared me to death. She didn't care what she said, who she said it to, or who it hurt."

"He constantly called us 'instigators' and there were many days when he walked out of class after an outburst of accusations."

"She would constantly nag the class until you were ready to hit her or something."

"I have no recollection except intense hatred for this man. He made it a terror to sit in that class."

"He was an obnoxious human being who thought he was a second Hitler."

"He gave his views and anyone with different views was a 'person wanting violence and rioting.' He yelled at us and really became violent himself. His subject was democracy and freedom of speech, but he gave us none."

And there are more:

"If I didn't know an answer in class, he would start chopping

me down. I don't think any teacher has the right to tell you that you're stupid or dumb, like he did."

"Twice he made me cry in class by calling me stupid and idiotic for giving a wrong answer or for not being able to back up an opinion with evidence."

"He got a big charge out of telling you and everyone else out loud when you did bad on a test."

"My worst teacher was constantly humiliating students—with a weekly seating chart according to grades, for example."

"This guy would pick out the kids who were the *A* students and try to flunk them on petty mistakes."

"He called his students 'Hey, you.' He ridiculed us in front of the class about a poor grade in another subject."

In contrast, there was this happy report:

"When a mistake was made, my best teacher made the student learn from it rather than punishing him for it."

31. Few subjects excite both students and adults as much as the appearance of youths today. Students have led a change in styles of both clothing and hair, and this has upset many adults. When teachers were not *upset, their students appreciated that fact:*

"Thank you for taking each person for what he is, not for the clothes or hairstyle he wears."

"My best teachers were not preoccupied with short skirts or long hair. They were there to teach."

Students insisted that styles of clothing and hair are merely superficial:

"No relationship ever has been proved between the length of a person's hair and his masculinity, political views, intelligence, or moral values. Long hair is simply a style, as is short hair. The length of a person's hair is an indication of nothing but his preference in this matter of fashion."

"Just because a young person grows long hair, sideburns, and whiskers doesn't mean he's a gangster or dope pusher or hippie. I've seen ears on some people that would look better if covered by hair."

"Miniskirts, long hair, tight pants, and sideburns are no more distracting to students than is a pretty woman teacher. Once the initial shock is gone, everyone gets used to the idea."

Students described specific dress code provisions and the result of their application:

"There are teen-agers every day that get sent home from school for wearing culottes and no socks. Why?"

"The dress code was ridiculous and insulted the students' intelligence. For example, boys could not wear collarless shirts or slacks that buttoned instead of zipped up with a fly."

"When a girl appeared in my school wearing bell bottom jeans to an after-school affair, she was labeled 'hippie' and brought into the counseling division to get help before it was (in their eyes) 'too late.' They asked whether you took, pushed, or knew where drugs were sold. If you said no, they called you a liar. If you said yes to any one of the three questions, then it was all over for you."

Enforcing a dress code takes a lot of time that could be better spent elsewhere:

"Trivial things such as dress code or minor discipline problems shouldn't be of such great importance to high school faculties and principals. There is so much more to be concerned about."

"The faculty as well as the students wasted their time on the dress code when our education was not perfect and the time should have been spent on ways of improving our education instead of trying to improve how we looked."

Of course, students have been excluded from school because of such styles, but pressure to conform won't be effective, according to these students:

"If you think that making us dress conservatively is going to make us think conservatively, then you are sadly mistaken. The neatest-dressed person in the world can be a hippie and nonconformist at heart, and still the worst-dressed person can be a wise, intelligent, and conservative person mentally. So you shouldn't try to tell us how to dress."

"No one, not government or the public schools, has the right to penalize a student for long hair, weird dress, marriage, or activities outside the school. At our school, students are treated as if they were incorrigibles. Tell the administrators to stick to their business (education) and I'll stick to mine (my life)."

Teacher reaction to styles has affected grading, according to these students:

"If you wore a skirt to class, you got a *B*. If you wore slacks, you got a *C*."

"She graded students on their appearance, because she claimed she could tell intelligence by appearance."

A minority of students dislike the "mod" style:

" 'Long hairs' should not be allowed to attend school unless they have haircuts and are neat."

"Compliments on keeping the long hair out of our school. Our school is respectable still."

"High schools today are being too lenient. They have no dress code, and little discipline. This should be corrected."

32. As a word, "relevance" has been overused, but as a concept, it's still what students want. What they are saying is, "Why should I be studying this? What connection does it have with the real world in which I will be living? Why is it worth my time?" Their idea is:

"Education should be directly related to life. Memorization just for the sake of a test is a waste of time."

"The responsibility of teachers is to guide students to think for themselves. It is not your responsibility to put a bunch of facts in front of your students and say 'memorize them.' Students should be able to relate such facts and use them in the world about them."

The students found that many of their best teachers did just that:

"He taught history and brought in the past, present, and future in a way that let us understand how the subject applied to us."

"He taught what was in the curriculum but he also attempted to prepare us for the world outside school and home that we'll face when we are on our own."

"The aim of my best teacher wasn't to merely finish the text; he wanted the students to learn not only his subject but also the lessons necessary to function properly in this merry-go-round world."

"She made an English class into a discussion of human problems. It was the most unstructured yet the most productive class I've ever been in."

"My social science teacher didn't avoid the problems of today. He faced them in class with us. When SDS was the big issue, he had the president of SDS come over from the college and answer our questions. We found out for ourselves right when we all needed it most just what SDS was all about."

"At the beginning of a class, the first 10 minutes were used to discover how to put to use what had been learned the preceding day, week, or year. Eventually, one learns to think in this manner without guidance, and it has proved to be a tremendous help."

Of course, there were schools that did not meet student expectations:

"I would ask what we as a school could have done to help solve the problems of war, pollution, and racial conflict."

"My school suffered from a tremendous lack of political awareness. It is basically up to the individual, but the school could have provided occasional programs on certain political issues (e.g., pollution)."

"The school was not enough aware of social problems. We were not permitted to wear political badges, etc., and in the world today that is silly."

And there were teachers who the students thought were not "in touch":

"Our teachers belong to a generation of more-or-less do-nothings. They have relaxed and lost touch with reality."

"I don't believe some of my teachers actually knew what was going on. They missed a lot, sitting in the coffee lounge."

"Many of the teachers didn't know what was going on in the world occupied by their pupils and didn't even try to relate the two."

"Many teachers still teach their classes in elementary fashion and then wonder why we act so childish. Since we're bored, we just do bothersome things."

But "relevance" can be overdone:

"For the past two years, I have really had no English. I have had teachers that are young and want to discuss today's problems rather than English."

33. The teen years are particularly difficult for a student trying to establish his own identity. What some teachers do to dehumanize students, to lump them all together, really to make them anonymous, is described this way:

"She said she was for individuality, but if any of that sneaked into your personality, she would soon crush it. Going into her class was giving up all you believed in."

"My worst teacher put us into one group, all together. We

were one lump, no individuality. If she wanted to punish someone, she would punish us all."

"At the end of the class, she didn't even know my name."

"She had me for a year and still never got my name right."

"She never reached down to her students. I think she learned only 3 names in our class of 30."

In contrast, there were student reports of teachers whose feelings for the students were wonderful. Their best teachers they wrote about as:

"She was a sincere Christian, kind and so willing to help, firm and honest in everything. She tried to make each person feel important."

"He had time for anything and anyone. He made every single person in our class feel important. Everyone was special."

There were many teachers who treated students as individuals and equals and with respect:

"He was really interested in you as a person, not as a job he had to do."

"He created every student, no matter how ugly or unaccepted, with respect."

"He was dedicated to us as individuals, and not to the boys' basketball team."

"He got the respect of even the biggest idiots because he treated them like great people."

Being listened to—and really heard—is important to us all, but especially to teen-agers:

"He listened to us and didn't just say 'yeah' and shrug it off."

"She made us feel each of our opinions were important—even if they weren't."

"Thank you, faculty members, for being so understanding and for being such a good set of ears. Just listening is a big boost for a high school student."

"She treated me as if what I said really mattered. She helped me feel like expressing my point of view because I knew she would consider it with an open mind."

"My best teacher listened. What more can a teen-ager ask for?"

"He would always look straight at me and pay close attention as if whatever I was saying was the most important thing he would ever hear."

34. What a teacher says has great importance to students, and when the teacher either carelessly or intentionally says something to hurt, it can have this result:

"My worst teacher made everyone feel terrible. He broke down their confidence in themselves."

"She treated us like slaves. We never had any say in anything. She always made me feel so terribly inferior and uncomfortable."

"She made a person feel guilty and like dirt under her feet."

There are many ways to hurt—deriding, "putting down," humiliating:

"He knocked you down so bad half of us would go out crying."

"He was always making cutting remarks. A girl in class was engaged to be married. He said to all of us that she was too young, too dumb, etc., to be a housewife."

And to some, cruelty is the most enjoyable way:

"He laughed when he flunked people."

"She loved to embarrass people—thought it was cute."

"If you didn't know the answer, she made sure you were embarrassed about it."

"He was a cruel person who delighted in putting people on the spot. He enjoyed making a fool out of someone."

"He would laugh when you made a mistake and carry it over even until the next day."

"As a human being, he would have made the Marquis de Sade seem like a nice guy."

35. Students commented on prejudice and treatment of minority group students in a variety of ways:

"Let's have a class on breaking down prejudice. We are prejudiced—it's inevitable, the way our parents raise us."

"Youth have far less racial prejudice, discrimination, or hatred than older people have."

"Schools should work on the problem of discrimination. High school is the time when many kids form their racial prejudices."

"Our schools need more integration because mine was almost entirely white. It is good to be brought up in a school of many-cultured students."

"My best teacher didn't care what color you were; she just thought of you as a person."

"Even though this teacher was of the opposite race, she treated everyone equally; she wasn't prejudiced, and this was good."

"There is too much leniency on the minor race in the school. Last year, there was a larger percentage of whites, so the teachers were easy on the Negroes. This year, it's just the opposite."

"I was disappointed with my school's policies concerning black students. They were not discriminated against, but the rebellious few were allowed to run rampant while the faculty and administration stood by wringing their hands and biting their lips, lest any punitive attempt on their part be regarded as prejudice against blacks. I am not a Southern bigot. I am simply in favor of punishment of wrongdoers, no matter what color."

"This teacher hated Negroes and let it show in her class."

"She started off by damning Negroes, Jews, and Catholics."

"She was such a petty person. If you chewed gum in her class, she'd throw you out. And if you mentioned the word 'Jew' or 'Negro,' she'd really blow her cool. Nothing except American Lit was to be discussed."

"She was racially bigoted (in class she said, 'It might have made them happier to have left the Negroes on the plantations')."

36. Are athletics good or bad for schools? Are athletic coaches good or bad teachers for high school students? One student identified a coach as his best teacher:

"He was my baseball coach and later my English teacher. His assignments and class activities were so interesting and varied, if I missed a class I was afraid I missed something good."

But others mentioned a coach as their worst teacher:

"My worst teacher figured out basketball plays for the first part of every period. This is bad in a biology class."

"My worst high school teacher also was a football coach. We never had classes; he always talked to the boys about last night's football game."

"He was also the football coach, and the football boys in our class cheated. He knew they did and still gave them good grades."

"He was also a coach. Or I should say, the coach was also a teacher. Students and teaching were farthest from his mind."

Student athletes were mentioned frequently as receiving special attention:

"Football stars seemed to gain more status and prestige than

did those students who worked just as hard for their high grades."

"It's not fair to give special privileges to sports heroes. For example, one boy who was unknown got expelled from school for having long hair. Another boy who was a sports hero had long hair and the big shots didn't even wink an eye at him."

"If this school is going to give a student something he can use whether he is college material or not, something must be offered besides sports. The artist, scientist, student, concerned person, hard worker should be given the equal time of the football hero. If such a student can find something he is good or interested in, he may have no desire to start on drugs, or drink-and-drive, etc."

Athletics receive the wrong priority, according to some:

"The precious money spent on football ought to be used to raise teacher salaries."

"The money spent on new basketball uniforms and rebuilding the football field and track area would have been put to better use securing superior teachers."

"Thirteen sports teams in our school were bused to all their games while 10 students in a chemistry class had to supply and pay for their own field trip to a nearby laboratory because school funds were lacking. Attendance at athletic events was mandatory, but no one in school knew we had a debate team."

One student suggested what few high schools ever have done:

"Quit letting athletic coaches teach classes, because they are too wrapped up in sports."

37. Does the age of the teacher make a difference in the effectiveness of the teaching? Is it really true that teen-agers can be understood only by persons under 30? Our students made it clear that the individual counts more than chronological age:

"My best teacher knew the problems teens can have, and she knew just what to say when you were troubled. And she was over 30, too."

"He was my dad's age but he didn't talk like it. He was terribly cool!"

"He was honest, friendly, decent, fair. He also was under 30 and understood us."

"He must be at least 60, but he knows what's happening. He has been around for awhile and has seen a lot of things. It just so happens he was old."

"Absolutely fantastic. She was near retirement age and was absent-minded, but she was always willing to cover any problems you had. She was always staying after school to work with individuals."

There were comments about "worst" teachers that mentioned age, too, but it wasn't the age that made them poor:

"She had antiquated ideas. She was only 25 but her ideas were 70 years old."

"He was a product of the seniority rule. He was over 50 and still taught from his college notes, which he just read. I sat on the front row and read novels."

38. College freshmen get an instant reading on their readiness for advanced study. When they find this lacking, they often seek to blame their high schools:

"I feel a great bitterness toward my high school. I was about as prepared to go into college as a baby is prepared to go into a snowstorm."

For some, the problem is the increase in freedom and responsibility:

"Stop babying high school students. It's really a shock for an average student who has played his way through high school

with his teachers giving him everything, to reach college and have all that responsibility dumped right in his lap. Some cannot handle it."

"Teach the students to be independent, for once in college you have only yourself to rely on. There will be no one saying, 'That's all right, just try harder next time and we'll let it go this time.' "

For others, the problem is the process of learning:

"Get kids ready for college better. Teach them to take good notes and how to read fast and understand at the same time."

"All teachers should get tougher and make the students study. In the few short weeks that I have been at college, I have had to learn to organize my time and learn the proper way to study. At my school, I wasn't forced to study for anything except tests."

"I wish my teachers had been more strict, mainly in the line of giving homework, tests, etc. I have found out in just the first few weeks of college that the assignments are longer and the tests harder."

"They should have prepared us more for college. In all my years in high school, I had to write only one term paper and a few essays. In college, I have to write an essay almost every week. I could fake my way all through high school, never study for a test, and still make *B*'s and *C*'s. But in college it shows as soon as you don't read just one chapter."

Some students found they were well prepared for college:

"My best teacher had good discipline and we learned. Now it's easy in college."

"She taught us so much English I was ahead of my class in college."

"She worked us all very hard. Her pushing helped me tremendously in college and helped me make better grades than other students in my freshman English class."

"Now that I'm in college, I appreciate my high school teachers. I realize that many of them are much better teachers than some I have now."

Other students who planned to get a job after high school felt short-changed:

"The choice of subjects was too poor and too limited to only college-bound students."

"The school taught me a lot of facts but it did not teach me anything of use to get a job such as welding or something like that."

Many students criticized what they identified as overemphasis on the entire subject of attending college:

"You should not push the student into going to college whether this is what he really wants or not. College is not the only thing in the world."

"A college education is important but not as necessary as it is stressed in my school."

"College should be emphasized less and vocational education more. After all, not everyone is college material."

"Education must be made realistic. We need to stop turning out just pre-college students. College is not for everybody. For those students whose aptitudes are better suited to other forms of labor, train them or at least give them a basic training so they can do a good job, whatever the field. It's no disgrace to be a plumber, electrician, carpenter. Some of them make $20,000-plus a year."

"Not all students are going on to universities, so get with it and start helping the other side of the track, also."

But vocational education is useful to many students in most communities, not merely to those on "the other side of the track," as this comment notes:

"Many students in my high school have been forced into college merely because we do not have classes in say, auto mechanics or hair dressing or good ones in woodworking or complete print-shop classes. We are in one of the wealthiest communities in my state, yet this does not mean we all are headed for college."

39. Students saw the rules of some schools as hindrances rather than helps:

"Too much regimentation in this school has squelched my curiosity and lessened my desire to discover things for myself."

"The faculty and administration ruined the spirit of so many by making everything so petty."

"Students feel as if they are being judged and spied on all the time."

"My worst teacher was fresh out of college and scared. She had this idea that unless she kept us quiet and seated, we would all rush up and tear the place apart. On the first day of school she issued a 'request sheet' explaining that these were not 'rules' but 'requests'—but as it turned out, if you broke just one, you'd be suspended from class. This was especially bad since it was an art course and how could I be creative in such an oppressive atmosphere?"

"Students in my high school were treated like fools and consequently they acted like fools. Places such as rest rooms and lunch rooms were constantly monitored. There were strict dress codes. The administration did not think students were capable of making a decision. If students are expected to misbehave, cheat if possible, and make poor decisions, they will."

Students singled out teachers who applied the rules in what they considered a sensible way:

"My best teacher enforced the logical school rules and forgot the stupid ones."

"This teacher even sided against the school administration when they did stupid things."

"He wasn't strict on all the school rules such as lateness to class; consequently no one was late or even bothered to give him any trouble."

"He was strict and stuck to the rules but at the same time told us why. He helped us see the other side."

"He'd give you a pass to get out of study hall to go to the library—he knew how boring it could be in there. Other teachers would tell you to drop dead first."

Students objected to specific rules:

"Hey, Principal, how about acting human and understanding, instead of like such a high and mighty ruler-disciplinarian. Communicate instead of handing down more and more stupid rules (such as 'no talking in the halls'—you know kids are going to talk)."

"Our school discriminated against married students who were permitted only to go to school and barred from any function, club, or sport. Maternity clothes are outlawed, if you can believe that."

To get over at least part of the hang-up about rules, some students suggested:

"We are here to learn, not break rules. So why not make the rules a little less breakable?"

"There have to be rules and regulations, of course, but why not make these the rules that we're going to have to abide by once we get out in the world?"

There was a single voice on the other side:

"Keep the decent and moral rules of the school. If you don't have them, make them. Don't let the kids tear down all the respect in the establishment. We need it. Make Christian rules and keep God in the schools."

40. The principal of a high school is an authority figure known to most students. Some were very complimentary in their remarks:

"Our principal was one of the kindest persons I have ever met. Before making any final decision, he would always ask us students how we liked the suggestion. If we had any different ideas, he would get the faculty to consider them."

"My high school principal was great. He tried to do everything we wanted within reason."

"I had a real groovy principal. He would sit down with us and listen to our demands. If they made sense, he would take them to the next teachers' meeting. He knew the changes we were going through, and he was always there when we needed him. He really made school worth going to."

Some students saw the problems a principal has:

"I know the hassles the school administrators go through. Many of the students come into the office with half-cocked, unfounded, and unthought-out views on dress codes, etc. It takes a lot of intelligence and all-around guts to handle these charges."

And there were other compliments:

"I would particularly like to congratulate my high school principal for his fantastic job in running the school and trying to point it into his students' heads that we cannot do anything we like. He was very strict on his rules and general appearance. This sure helped me to grow up and see what the world is actually like."

"I would compliment the administration for their good job during the integration problem. They have had very little trouble. You won't hear that on the news, will you?"

"The administration here is okay. But it's a private school and can put fear in the hearts of students."

Some students thought the principal was too lenient:

"You are letting students and parents push you around too much, and are letting students get away with too much."

"You made a great mistake when you gave up too much of your authority."

Some thought he was too strict:

"Stop running your school like a fortress and your students like an army."

"Our principal had no room for compromise. He wanted no long hair and nothing more was to be said."

Some criticized the principal for not listening more to students:

"The administrators were a bunch of dingalings unaware of student needs and extremely slow to respond to student desires."

"We had a student council but every time it had an idea, the idea was dismissed by the nod of the head of the principal."

And some disliked the principal as a leader:

"I would like to show the principal what a wishy-washy person he really is. He will not take any responsibility. He completely evades the issue and tries to pass the buck."

"To the principal: You are a poor, poor leader. How can you lead others when your mind is cluttered with walls of hatred and disgust for the majority of students in your school?"

"I would tell the principal that he should be the principal of a nursery school. He didn't know what to do."

41. The passage of even a few months' time makes quite a difference in student attitude toward high school. Just 90 days after their graduation, many wrote like this:

"If I could, I would go back to high school and do it all over again and work twice as hard."

"I'm glad they made us do the things we had to do, even though at the time we hated them for it."

"Students do not realize how much they were taught in high school and how they should put this knowledge to best advantage until they are away from the school and the community."

"I regret not taking high school as seriously as I should have. I only hope others will try harder."

"I was one of those who used to say 'grades are unimportant,' but I've learned better. I still don't think that grades measure with any real accuracy either intelligence or the child's grasp of the subject, but I do know that they are one of the few guidelines that college admissions personnel have. Also, I should have learned how to study, to discipline myself to study. I didn't because I wouldn't listen. But just because I didn't, doesn't mean you should stop telling students to study hard and get the best grades possible. Keep on. It just might be heard by some of them."

42. If students had the opportunity to run their own schools, what would they do? These are their suggestions to school authorities:

"Teach the students more about today's problems. Prepare the students better for the years after graduation. Have more subjects about the U.S. and its economic problems."

"Discuss social problems in math and science classes. Problems like birth control, pollution, over-population, and Vietnam should be open issues in all classrooms."

"Put patriotism in the school (saluting the flag and saying the pledge of allegiance)."

"Shorten all classes but lab and shop to one-half hour."

"Have high school for three years, not four. During senior year, most people take easy courses and cut classes. They are very bored. The last year in high school does not prepare you for college any more. By this time, most people are ready to get

out on their own, and those that aren't won't be ready one year later, anyway."

"Give counselors back their job of counseling rather than disciplining."

"Offer a course in which students could learn to write checks, balance a budget."

"Eliminate homework."

"Get students more involved. Offer more electives. Have more career motivation—not just Teachers Club and Nurses Club but automotive technology, retardation fields, social work, social services, and the like."

"Make the grading system pass-fail, not *ABCDF*. Having letter grades only makes the children think that the higher they get, the better they are. Then they look down on people who can't do as well. That creates racial friction, money madness, and neglect of children."

"Give girls equal time with boys in physical education and athletic activities. They deserve the use of these facilities in building sound bodies."

"Open the school to recreational use since our town has no facilities for youth."

"Don't stress religion so much. By the eighth grade, you either have or don't have morals, and high school religion didn't help out."

"Allow students to call teachers by their first names. The teachers then would become more of a friend than some sort of supreme being."

Be stricter:

"Discipline is still good medicine for old problems."

"Be more wary of cheating, because teachers don't notice it at all now."

"Be stricter to better prepare us for what we will face. Also

prepare us for some kind of job other than secretarial or bookkeeping."

"I'd tell my principal to hold his ground. I'd tell the guidance counselor to really try to help the students, not make buddies of them. I'd tell teachers to be authorities on their subjects, keep good discipline, try to treat all students the same, and not try to fake anybody out."

"Do not be too liberal. Students still need rules even though they feel they do not. Students like to feel that someone cares enough to set rules and regulations for them. Sure, they don't act that way but that's because they are supposed to be tough and not really need their elders."

"You are far too soft with young people. The teachers who command most respect always are the ones who demand the most."

"Teachers shouldn't teach what will please the kids—that is stupidity and the first stage of irresponsibility."

"Keep standards; don't yield to small minorities or rebels."

"Don't give in to students. Don't listen to parents who say 'Don't hit my Johnny.' When you make a decision, stick to it."

"Don't worry about student activists and radicals but focus primarily on discipline that shows students who is the teacher and who is the one being taught."

"Have discipline in the schools that maybe the students don't get at home."

Be more liberal:

"Let the student think what he wants instead of telling him what he should think."

"Loosen the rules to where learning can occur without being stifled. Administrators should be supervisors of education, not the FBI of the high school. Educate students rather than putting them through some ridiculous four-year obstacle course."

"Students should have the right to walk out if something offensive or disrespectful is said to them."

"Give students more freedom; having to sign a piece of paper to go to the school library is pretty ridiculous."

"Don't tell us how to act because three-fourths of us will do just the opposite."

"Why kick a boy out of school for skipping classes? He will not be kicked out of life for not going to work one day."

How teachers should relate to students:

"Don't stand over your student; sit down with him."

"A teacher should activate within an individual student a thirst for adventure, creativity, and wisdom."

"Become more involved with the students instead of holding yourself aloof."

"Don't try to be a big brother but don't be a teaching machine, either."

"Jump down off your pedestal and get on a level with the students so all can learn."

"Try to teach high schoolers how to get along in life, just as much as show them science, English, etc. Don't let them leave without having helped to develop their personality in a good way."

"Put yourself in the student's shoes. It makes an alarming difference."

"Make students discover each other as human beings, not as someone to copy homework from."

"Get to know the students and become more concerned about them. They will be running the country pretty soon."

"Take time to listen. So what if a lesson plan is set back one day? If it helps only one person, it's done the job, and to him school becomes a lot more than just a 'have to' thing."

"Help us help ourselves. It is difficult because we are going through a transitional stage where adults sometimes treat us like children and other times expect us to act like mature people."

"Get off our backs. You make the students like convicts in a penitentiary with all the stupid rules and the breathing down our necks. Don't try to be what you are not. Don't put yourself up like paragons of virtue and preach down at us. Also, give us credit for having half a brain."

And more about teacher-student relations:

"Quit being my buddies and be more of a guide. Someone I don't have to like but I do respect. I have many friends as confused as I; what I need is someone to go to for help when I think I need it."

"Don't act like it's a crime to be a teen-ager."

"Give a reason with rules. Tell us why we can't chew gum in class (if you know)."

"Stop treating students like unfeeling puppets whose strings you can pull."

"Give us a chance. We aren't as dumb or as immature as you really think we are."

"You can preach and discipline and lecture till you're blue in the face but all you're doing is making the young people resent you even more. Try to treat the students as individuals, as young adults. Kids in high school don't have all the answers, so gently try to show by your example what to do and how to get somewhere in life. But don't be hypocrites or Puritans. Respect the students like you expect them to respe[illegible]ou."

"Get your community in shape and quit bein[illegible]pon-sive to state and national matters. Protect the [illegible] con-stitutional rights as an American."

"Give all students the same opportunity and o[illegible]k one or two students for all the special opportunities."

"Do something about the average student. They are ignored and forgotten."

And this final suggestion:

"Teacher evaluation by students would be a good idea."

"Students should be able to take part in a teacher survey to help in deciding who is re-hired each year."

"Let students pick the teachers whose classes they'll go to. You'll get rid of the bad teachers because there won't be anyone in their classrooms."

43. Many of the student quotations in the preceding part of this book are excerpts taken from longer statements to prevent excessive repetition. However, certain answers were so comprehensive and so well done that it seemed a shame to cut them into smaller pieces.

Hence as the analysis proceeded, a selected few of the responses were put aside in what might be classified as the "10 best" in each category. As things turned out, there weren't exactly 10 in any of the classifications, but all those that survived in this very select group seem to have a particular message that merits complete attention.

This time we'll start with the descriptions of the best teachers:

"He saw teaching not as a job but as a profession. He was a gentle person, a human person who could feel feelings and be honest. What I remember him most for was an outlook that for me affirmed the fact that even in a medium-sized Midwestern industrial city, the spirit of man, the adventure of Odysseus against the forces of blind circumstance, loves and grows. For this man taught us that if there is a rotten circumstance, when there is death and suffering, we ought to do something about it. He did not teach us arrogance. He did not teach us that man is invincible. He did teach us that if we try, we will have a better chance of defeating evil than if we don't."

"He was a great teacher because of his tolerance, ability to joke, ability to take it as well as dish it out, his fairness, his

Christian personality and influence, his teaching ability, optimism, and over-all jovial attitude. He tried to teach kids about life and although he emphasized a good education, he championed common sense."

"He was broad-minded, spontaneous, sincere, progressive, understanding, free-thinking, questioning, curious, eager to learn, and inspirational."

"It is impossible to say enough for this teacher. It is hard to know how and what to say. This teacher knew students and he had the qualities to make every student love him. He made us want to learn and succeed. He made us question and resolve. He was firm, yet I always felt at ease, no matter what we talked about—personal or impersonal. He was interested in each of us and, believe me, he knew us almost inside out. He always had time to help or listen, yet he himself was very active in and out of school. I truly respected and admired him!"

"He never taught me in a classroom, but one day he stopped me in the hall and said, 'You know, I like the way you walk, so tall and proud. It makes me proud to know you, a teen-ager who isn't ashamed of herself or her surroundings.' "

"My best high school teacher knew how to relate historical events with the 'now' happenings of today. This man knew what love, peace, and understanding are all about. He harbored the same American ideals I did and the ones our forefathers wanted to practice: those of equality and freedom. With these ideals in mind, he discussed the situations of our world and helped us to form opinions about issues and plan our futures so that we can better our environment. After all, isn't that what our generation is all about?"

"What made this man so great was his treatment of students as people, sons of God, not as puppets who are to serve the 'establishment' blindly. He taught us to be critical, but most important, he helped us find ourselves by helping us ask relevant questions of God, man, life."

"He had the ability to make people 'come out' at their best.

Everyone in his classes left them wiser, happier, friendlier, more vital, more open, and more knowledgeable."

"This person was really great because she was a person. She understood problems and tried to help not only in our subject but in our personal hardships. Her classroom was always open for remarks on her teaching or for her remarks on your work. Her classes called her 'Mom.' To top it all off, she was a Negro teacher in an almost totally white school."

"He was a man and I don't say that lightly. He was small in stature but he seemed like a rock wall, ever present to help and teach in any way he could. He affected my life almost as much as my parents, and isn't that what a true teacher should do?"

"I knew this person very well before I came to class. Still, I was scared to death the first day. He was well-respected by both students and faculty, so why was I so terrified? I never talked to anyone in this class, and I didn't try to draw attention to myself in any way. The year progressed very well. He gave me individual instruction when I needed it. I appreciated him more and more as I saw him teach and excel. When school was over, I went to his room to thank him for the fine year we had had together. I never could get up the nerve to call him by his proper school title, so when I left I just said goodbye and see you when you get home, Dad.' "

Here are the descriptions of the worst teachers:

"He was conceited, lazy, and had a total lack of interest in what he was supposed to be doing. He was hard to get along with. He did only what he was required to do. He told us what we could get by with and still pass. He hardly encouraged learning."

"We had a middle-age make-believe hippie who was a big phony and a drag. He played far-out music which was great and rapped a lot but he didn't teach us a thing. He made fun of exams, never graded papers, and messed us all up."

"His explanations were always hurried and confused and whenever you said you still didn't understand, he would look

at you dumbly, throw his chalk, and then use the same words to rush through it again. He would always talk enthusiastically about sports, then admit casually that he taught only for the money."

"He was anti-administration. He refused to use assigned books and expected the students to make up their own assignments, study when they wanted, how they wanted, etc. It was like he was turning over his job and his responsibilities as a teacher to the students. The teacher is supposed to be the leader, but in this class there was no leadership and nothing was accomplished."

"He didn't even prepare lessons for the class. He'd mess around with some topic for a couple days and then start another before concluding the first. He lost all our test scores before recording the grades. He'd get up to the end of the marking periods, then give us huge reading assignments because he had no grades to show for the quarter."

"She was sadistic. She thought it was wrong to abolish public hangings, right out in the middle of town. She said she thought there would be less crime if families would fix picnic lunches and take their children to the hanging and say 'See that man? That's what could happen to you for breaking the law.' "

"My worst teacher was really the worst. Out of class she wasn't bad, but in class she was terrible. She went at top-notch speed, never letting students catch up. She hardly ever went by the book, and what she did say, she mumbled so you couldn't understand her. When she got mad, she'd throw pencils, chalk, you name it. It wouldn't have been so bad if I'd learned something but I didn't."

"I hate to even classify this person as a teacher. All he did was scream and yell and have temper tantrums like a two-year-old. He was notorious for making girls cry by embarrassing them in front of the class when they couldn't answer a question. This was a language class and when we went to his desk to recite dialogues, he would be busy painting his fingernails."

"I think he missed his calling. He would have been a better

truck driver. He was loud, rude, inconsiderate, and very stupid when it came to handling teens. He had a master's degree, which goes to show 'brains ain't everything.' "

"He was young but he acted like a little kid. Every day between classes he would raid the toilets to try to catch the smokers. It was like a phobia with him; if he didn't catch some guy, you could see the disappointment written all over his face. I could understand if he had to use the toilet and happened to catch somebody, but it was like a game with him—he'd actually come running in to try and bust someone."

"When it came time for the final exam, no one knew how to work the problems but while we were trying, this teacher kept talking out loud about football and bouncing a golf ball on the floor."

There were special compliments for the principal and teachers in their schools from these students:

"The school is always open, and one of the teachers or the principal will be there with the kids, helping and supervising them in any way possible. Through these sponsored activities, our school has less stealing, drinking, and just plain getting into any form of trouble."

"Thank you for giving us a yearbook in my senior year, for that fire-drill that cut into math, for the new gym suits, for the guest speakers who broke the monotony, for installing a jukebox, for understanding why, and for the four best years of my life."

"Thank you for letting me grow and be myself at times when it would have been easier to make me conform. You let me try my ideas, and when I failed you were there to help me, and when I succeeded you were there to congratulate me. You gave me facts to base my opinions on and become clearer and more open-minded in my thinking. You showed me that there are many things to life, and that it takes many things to make a well-rounded individual. Thank you for accepting my classmates and

me for what we are—human individuals with feelings, faults, and personalities of our own."

"Thank you for letting me go free in the school system. Thank you for putting your trust in the students. I apologize for skipping gym 16 times (but I would do the same thing again). And I apologize for not taking advantage of all the opportunities and facilities available. I really kind of loafed."

"I was very lucky to be able to attend my high school. Not only because of the great administration and faculty but because of the school itself. The classes were small enough to allow individual attention to the students. The students were allowed to voice their opinions and, in most cases, something was done about them. The standards were high, yet reasonable. Perhaps I am prejudiced, but I think it is one of the great schools in America."

"I would like to thank my principal and teachers because they all influenced and helped shape my life. They poured knowledge into my soul; now it is up to me to use that knowledge to benefit myself and others. I learned tolerance and understanding of those different from me. I learned that life is a democracy and that I'm not always in the majority. And that helpful, constructive comments get your point across much better than criticism. I found that life is sometimes not what it seems to be, that it is sometimes full of phonies, and that sincerity is the best route. And I learned to accept both victory and defeat, but never to give up if you know you are right. I learned to try to keep an open mind. But most of all I learned to try my level best at all I attempted, never to attack anything half-heartedly, and that if I am going to do anything, to do it RIGHT."

"The principal has done a fine job and the teachers have taught us well. They are understanding and above all are fair and they care about each individual. They have tried to teach us how to live in the changing society, how to add up life's regrets and rewards, our fellowman and his feelings toward others, different ways of living, and above all how to survive in

this world of ours by standing on our own two feet and believing what we want to."

"They were understanding, considerate, respected students as people, interesting, intelligent, compassionate, and sincerely concerned with my scholastic, physical, and spiritual well-being. The majority of teachers ran a disciplined, interesting, organized classroom. There was a high level of competition and we were taught enough to where we could carry on intelligent conversations. More often than not, if you passed a group in the hallways or at lunch, they were discussing dilemmas in the realms of mathematics, science, politics, history, religion, philosophy, etc. I had a wonderful experience."

"While I did not like certain teachers, thought the teaching methods of some poor, knew the grading methods of others to be unfair, and did not always agree with the policy of the administration, I still considered my high school years the most enjoyable in my life up to that time, and I consider it a privilege to have been able to attend classes there."

These students had had an unhappy experience in school:

"I was not sad to leave. The school's administration has suppressed student freedoms, freedom of the press, and is now suppressing and will continue to suppress the human spirit that burns brightly in the eyes, the hearts, and the souls of every adolescent."

"I would like to tell the principal and teachers of the time I wasted in most of my classes and how small-minded they teach our young to be. The principal was not a principal in any way. If you 'buttered' him up you could do as you pleased, and if not, forget it. He was very closed-minded and often resorted to physical strength to put his ideas across. As for my teachers, some were great and others pathetic. We got a lot of college students who couldn't make it anywhere but in an education field. To really teach you have to care, and the majority of these people don't. Their classes were a waste of time because they didn't care enough to prepare an interesting or intelligent class."

"Understanding, respect, acceptance, and help are more important than any new football field or any number of straight *A* students or any country or city racial quota. A 16-year-old girl, pregnant, not married, needs an education, needs the acceptance of returning to school much more than 10 promising students. A 16-year-old boy, faced with marijuana charges, needs a helping hand, understanding, and support, not shame and reproach."

"It is time we saw education as the beginning of life, rather than high school as the last we are going to get. People get educated more once they're out of school, because they are developing themselves as individuals rather than trying to please the teachers. They have spent three or four years in high school doing what the teacher wants them to."

"Make education relevant. Too many times we study just because that is what is expected of us and if we don't, we won't get into college and we'll be social dropouts. Learning has become irrelevant to life. It has become almost a dollar sign. No one seems to realize the importance and satisfaction of learning just because it enhances the mind. Learning should not be taught as what it will do for me but how it can broaden my understanding."

"I cannot fully relate to you how much I owe your fine institution. My badly bitten nails; my outstanding ability to deceive and to conform; a garbage pail full of past tests, assignments, and notes; my ability to endure and learn despite the educational process; and a two-bit diploma are your finest gifts to me."

"If you are dedicated and really enjoy teaching, it can be a wonderful thing. But I know lots of people who chose teaching because they had no idea what else to do with their lives."

"You seem to think a religion course is adequate reason for a parent to pay $200 a year to send his child to your school. You have the opportunity to make this school an exciting and relevant alternative to the public school system. But instead you make it a carbon copy of a public school with tuition and a religion class tacked on. It is time that you forget about chasing

people with hair too long or skirts too short and concentrate on how you can offer classes and scheduling that provide a viable alternative to the public school system. If you don't, this school won't exist two years from now."

"I had about had it with all the run-arounds I had gotten in three years, so I went before the Student-Faculty Senate and told them that they were very nicely squelching human mind development, and with their old outdated ideas and practices they were conveniently fitting the students into a plastic mold that might never bend. I told them they were sinful and disgusting and had no right to be in the influential positions of teaching and administration they were in. I meant it then and I would do it all over again—only worse!"

"I would like to 'commend' my principal and teachers for:

"Turning out a group of people so conditioned to being told when to inhale and when to exhale that any real educational experience probably would suffocate them.

"For producing 'students' who can scarcely understand another's point, much less present valid ones of their own.

"For impressing upon us so greatly the importance of making an impression, so much so that before one can permit a thought to cross her mind, she will consider how it will seem."

"Nowhere in a teacher's contract does it say he has to make an honest attempt to teach somebody something. It is amazing that the schools do no more damage than they actually do."

These are suggestions from the students about how to run the schools:

"Lead, direct, and channel interests rather than dictate them. Make students want to seek out answers themselves; make them interested in everything on earth; make them want to read every word printed, study every painting, hear every symphony, do and be every thing on earth just once so that they can better appreciate their talents and that of others."

"Students may not be adults but they are people. They should be included in making rules and policies that are for

them. Let students learn to take responsibility by giving it to them."

"The more youth get, the more they want. But they demand in order to find out where they stand. Anyone, including the freedom-loving young, wants to know where the boundaries are. It is frightening, expecially when you are still forming your standards, to find everyone saying 'whatever you want is right.' If you as administrators understood this, you would find youth easier to live with. There is a happy medium between dogma and soft touch called mutual respect."

"The faculty should be used as parents or the kind of parents students wish they had."

"Teach us about democracy and the way God has helped us down through the ages. Never hint for a minute that communism is good. Have high moral standards and be good examples. Take a personal interest in each student. Give of yourself to those who need special help. CARE."

"Don't let cheating go without punishment, because if you do, you're teaching that dishonesty pays."

"If you are concerned about today's youths' violence why in the hell do you not get at the basic reasons for their violence instead of ranting, raving, screaming, beating, criticizing, and discouraging any change for the better? Get your fingers out of your ears and listen; then help these students stop useless deaths through pollution, starvation, and warfare."

"Please don't put the better-qualified teachers in the higher grades. The most critical stage a student goes through is between the eighth and eleventh grades. I didn't get any really good teachers until I entered my junior year of high school. That was almost too late."

"Remember, the average student needs as much loving help as the excellent and poor student. We're just as confused even if we don't create problems."

"Dear representative of the adult world: You are one of the many people who can help teen-agers. Don't turn away; offer your help, understanding, and love; and above all, be there when he needs you. You are a second family and it is your duty as people, not teachers, to help other members of this world. Because you are teachers, you are trained in the understanding of fellow human beings. If a teen-ager looks troubled, reach out your hand and try to communicate. It is this reaching out that stays with the teen-ager forever. Some never learn because no one ever has taken the time to care for them."

"Remember that 'new' doesn't mean 'bad.' We may eventually discover that your way is right, but let us fail occasionally."

"I'd ask the teachers to practice what they preach, to be an example to us. I had a driver education instructor tell us to wear seat belts for our own safety but refuse to wear one himself—and he was driving with us at the time. I've had teachers who make fools of some of the students in class and at other times remark how cruel children are to those more unfortunate than themselves. I don't think most teachers realize the effect or influence they have on the students they teach."

"I would like them to understand that I, an 18-year-old, am already a person, not just an empty shell ready to be programed the way my teachers tried in high school. Young people of today really do know something. Today's youth are just trying to make the world know, too, because we are more sure of ourselves than the generation before us. We can see how life has changed into something it wasn't intended to be, we see what a mess this planet is in, and we know that something has to be done before it's too late. Since no one else is doing anything very important to help, why not let us try?"

This student expressed in free verse her reaction to the way adults respond to youth:

"This is what I would say:
I wish I wish
That I could
say what
I wish
so that you
would not laugh
at it
at me.

And you say you would
not laugh out loud
but inside you would
be laughing
so loud
that I could hear
it from there, too.
So I will remain
quiet
exposing my wishes only
to this paper
which cannot laugh."

CHAPTER III.

Twenty Self-Rating Questions for Teachers

Answer "yes" or "no":

..... Do I really care and let my students know?

..... Do I really listen to my students and hear what they say?

..... Am I there when my students need me—after class, after school, at home by the telephone?

..... Do students bring their personal problems to me?

..... Do I know all my students' names?

..... Am I there to make each student feel important, rather than just to make myself feel powerful?

..... Can I tell when a student is "up-tight" and respond to his feelings?

..... Do I know my subject matter well enough to welcome all questions in class?

..... Do I get my students to think instead of merely parroting back what I say?

..... Is there an orderly climate for learning in my classroom?

..... Do I emphasize learning more than discipline?

..... Do I spend time with the slow learners who really need it, rather than "copping out" by concentrating on just the bright ones?

..... Do I keep my students from getting bored or going to sleep in my class?

..... Do all my students participate?

..... Do I work my students and myself hard enough so we both end the year with a sense of accomplishment rather than merely a feeling of relief?

..... Do I grade on learning, rather than on a like-dislike basis?

..... Can I admit my own mistakes openly?

..... Can we still be friends if one of my students disagrees with me and proves me wrong?

..... Do students learn from my tests, instead of merely memorizing and then forgetting?

..... Would my students have characterized me on YOUTH-POLL as their best teacher?

(These are among the characteristics of teachers the YOUTH-POLL students said they most needed and admired. Give yourself 5 points for every "yes" answer. Score above 75 and you're pretty good.)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author of the study reported in this volume is a man who spent the years between 1950 and 1970 in university administration. Gordon A. Sabine earned the B.A. and M.A. from the University of Wisconsin and the Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota. He wrote for daily newspapers and magazines and was a journalism professor before becoming dean of the School of Journalism at the University of Oregon in 1950. In 1955, he was named the first dean of the new College of Communication Arts at Michigan State University, and, in 1960, became vice-president for special projects at Michigan State. He was an ACT Fellow in 1970-71.